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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of) DA 98-111
Telephone Number Portability) CC Docket No. 95-116

**COMMENTS OF SPRINT SPECTRUM L.P. d/b/a SPRINT PCS
SUPPORTING CTIA'S PETITION FOR FORBEARANCE**

The costs of number portability are staggering, particularly for new PCS entrants. At this relatively early stage of wireless competition, the wireless number portability mandate works to harm competition and the public interest. Sprint PCS agrees with CTIA that "all CMRS providers, and in particular PCS carriers, must first devote their finite resources toward meeting the current competitive requirements of the market: namely, network buildout and fostering price competition" and that "[t]he market has demonstrated that the key to their competitive status is enhancing coverage areas, aggressive marketing, and reducing consumer telephone prices."

Sprint PCS is still working on detailing all the costs associated with fully implementing wireless number portability, but the cost to CMRS carriers to implement just the first phase of number portability -- i.e., the FCC's directive that CMRS carriers be able to deliver calls to numbers that have been ported between wireline carriers -- is enormous, especially for new market entrants. Sprint PCS estimates that the cost to a PCS provider like Sprint PCS to deliver calls to a ported number will likely quickly grow to tens of millions of dollars a year within about year, and could amount to well over \$100,000,000 just through the year 2001 at the three-tenths of a cent/call rate the RBOCs

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want to charge wireless carriers under their Query Service tariffs, depending on call volume and whether the FCC permits the RBOCs and other incumbent LECs to charge the three-tenths of a cent on all calls, regardless of whether a number has been ported out of an exchange. Sprint PCS has objected to the query service tariffs, including the unlawful practice of charging a query service charge on every call. Sprint PCS' *Oppositions To Direct Case* filed in CC Docket No. 98-14 are incorporated by reference. During the first phase of number portability as presently scheduled, between December 31, 1998 and June 31, 1999, the query service charges that RBOCs and other incumbent LECs want to charge wireless carriers go toward subsidizing the costs associated with a customer porting his or her number from one wireless carrier to another. The costs across the wireless industry in just this first phase of number portability -- during which CMRS carriers do not benefit -- if the RBOCs and incumbent LECs are allowed to charge CMRS carriers query services charges results in massive subsidies of wireline number portability.

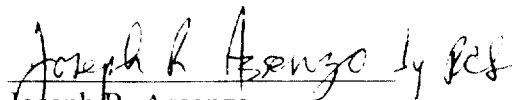
Although Sprint PCS is still working on detailing all the costs associated with implementing the second phase of wireless number portability -- when wireless carriers must be able to accept ported numbers from wireline and wireless carriers and allow numbers to be ported to wireline and wireless carriers -- there is no question that wireless systems across the nation will be impacted and that the impact will be deep and very expensive. CTIA's *Petition for Extension of Implementation Deadlines* in DA 97-2579, for example, identifies a "series of important issues concerning standards, nationwide roaming, and customer service/back office support." Separation of the MIN and MDN impacts all network and back office systems; for instance, the Mobile Switching Center,

the Home Location Register, Visiting Location Register, and Signal Transfer Point. Separating the Min and MDN has national and international impacts on roaming, too, as discussed in CTIA's *Petition for Extension of Implementation Deadlines*. Wireline carriers have a limited geographic number portability mandate (top 100 MSAs, except by request), and the FCC has actually taken steps to limit that mandate by requiring deployment only by switch request; whereas, wireless carriers may be effectively required to implement wireless number portability throughout the country in order to support roaming.

The benefit of wireless number portability in the first instance has not been demonstrated, but leaving that issue aside for the time being, wireless number portability imposes more of a financial burden than a competitive benefit at this relatively early stage of wireless competition. The enormous capital requirements associated with implementing wireless number portability impedes buildout, aggressive marketing, and price competition – which are all keys to meaningful competition – to the detriment of the public interest.

WHEREFORE, Sprint PCS supports CTIA's Petition for Forbearance.

Respectfully submitted,


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